



MERROW PARK & RIDE PROGRESS REPORT

GUILDFORD LOCAL COMMITTEE

20th JANUARY 2005

KEY ISSUE

This report updates the Committee on progress achieved on the Merrow Park & Ride project, and provides updated cost estimates for the project.

SUMMARY

The report sets out the previous resolutions of both this Committee and Guildford Borough Council's Executive and provides update information on the highway works, the car park and the development agreement. The programme for completion of the project is described in outline. Annexe A sets out the current estimates of the cost of the project, both capital and revenue, and showing whether these will fall to Surrey County Council, Guildford Borough Council or where appropriate the developer.

Report by

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR

Surrey Atlas Ref.

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GUILDFORD B.C. WARD(S)

MERROW
CLANDON & HORSLEYS

COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION(S)

GUILDFORD EAST
SHERE

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is for information only.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1 This report was dispatched later than the minimum 5 clear working days prior to the Committee meeting, and may only be considered by the Committee by agreement with the Chairman according to paragraph 2.2 in Part 1 of the County Council's Standing Orders. These state:

“2.1 The Summons and Agenda papers for Council meetings will be sent to all Members 7 days before the meeting.

2.2 Only the business on the Agenda will be discussed at a Council meeting except for urgent matters which the Chairman rules may be considered.”

The report could not be published earlier as it was necessary to await the outcome of Guildford Borough Council's Executive, which discussed the overall Park and Ride strategy at its meeting on Thursday 13th January 2005. Despite this the report is considered urgent since the contract for the highway works may commence as early as late February, prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

2 Merrow Park & Ride was last discussed at the meeting of this Committee on 29 January 2004. The minutes recorded those who were invited to speak and the principal points made for and against the proposals. The decisions of the Committee were recorded as follows:

“The officer recommendations were as follows:

The Committee is asked to agree that:

- (i) the proposed Merrow Park and Ride facility be approved in principle.*
- (ii) the funding of the operational costs of the Park and Ride bus services from the County Council's on-street parking account be approved in principle.*
- (iii) a further report be brought to the Committee when full information is available on any external sources of revenue funding.*
- (iv) the Local Transportation Director be authorised to complete the detailed design of the access and commence construction in 2004/05 using LTP funding.*
- (v) the Local Transportation Director be requested to investigate the feasibility of bus priority measures along the Park and Ride route, reporting back to a future meeting of the committee.*

David Davis requested an amendment to recommendation (iv), adding "...subject to confirmation of the availability of Local Transport Plan capital funds by the County Council's Executive on 17th February 2004."

Members voted 12 – 3 in favour of the recommendations as amended (above). Nick Brougham requested that it be noted that he voted against the recommendations."

THE HIGHWAY WORKS

- 3 The detailed design of the roundabout on the A246 is now complete, and a drawing will be on display at the meeting of the Committee. The roundabout has an outside diameter of 60 metres and comprises four arms. The east and west arms serve the existing A246, the southern arm provides access to the Park and Ride car park and the development site, while the northern arm will provide a new access to Clandon Park. The existing access will be closed and the existing gap in the central reservation at Temple Court will also be closed.

- 4 Since the estimated contract value exceeds £500,000, this project will not automatically be carried out by the County Council's partner constructor for the west part of the County, Ringway Highway Services but has to be put out to tender although both Ringway and Carillion, the contractor for the east of the County, were invited to tender. The proposed contract was therefore advertised on 25 September 2004 as a result of which 23 expressions of interest were received. The pre-qualification process sifted these according to financial status, health and safety and experience of similar contracts. As a result, 'invitations to tender' were sent to five contractors on 23 November. Tenders were returned on 22 December.

- 5 The five tenders are currently being assessed on the basis of quality and price, weighted 25:75 respectively. The quality criteria include:
 - Experience of similar Contracts
 - Contract approach and methodology
 - Programming
 - Head office and site staff
 - Head office support facilities
 - Health and safety
 - Sub-contractors
 - Customer care and liaison

As with the prequalification assessments, a range of officers are involved in the assessment process in order to avoid bias and also to separate the quality and price evaluations.

- 6 In the event that more up to date information is available, an oral update will be given at the meeting of the Committee.

THE CAR PARK

- 7 GBC officers have set up an officer board for this project and an initial outline design has been prepared. A detailed topographical survey has been carried out and officers are now examining alternative detailed car park layouts. The site will be extensively landscaped to minimise its environmental impact. The design of the car park lighting is regarded as critical, and in accordance with planning conditions will comprise low level lamp columns and lanterns with maximum 'cut off', minimising light spillage beyond the site. The Park and Ride car park will be separate from the car park serving the rest of the development. Design of the car park will be complete in time for construction of the car park to commence once the highway works have been completed.

THE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

- 8 Officers of both Councils have met the developer and/or his professional advisers on several occasions during 2004 in order to:
- a) secure compliance with the planning conditions imposed by GBC as Planning Authority. The developer has been made aware that no flexibility can be permitted without express application for formal revision of the imposed planning conditions.
 - b) secure contributions from the developer to the capital cost of the highway junction and the ongoing revenue support for the park and ride bus services, ensuring also that these payments are bonded to safeguard the County and Borough Councils' positions in the event that the developer was unable to proceed.
 - c) tie all parties (the two councils, the developer and the owner of the freehold of the land) to their obligations to each other.
 - d) ensure that no part of the development can proceed without completion of the entire development.
 - e) align the designs of the various elements of the project being designed and constructed by the various parties.
- 9 The negotiations have been constructive and helpful and the development agreement has reached an advanced stage of preparation. The County Council will not enter into a contract for the construction of the roundabout until the agreement is signed by all parties. The developer cannot proceed with the construction of the development until the roundabout is complete. The most time-critical part of the development is the earth-moving operation associated with the golf course construction, which cannot be carried out during adverse weather. The critical path in the programme therefore includes the completion of the development agreement and the highway works. Since the developer is keen to proceed, it is anticipated that the agreement will be completed later this month.

PROGRAMME

- 10 Tenders are currently being analysed, and officers expect to be in a position to select the chosen contractor by the end of January. Allowing for a mobilisation period of 4 weeks, it is therefore expected that construction of the roundabout on the A246 will commence early in March 2005.
- 11 Until the successful tenderer has been chosen, the contract duration will not be known, but it is anticipated that this will be in the region of 3 to 6 months. Conditions attached to the grant of planning permission require that the highway works be completed prior to any part of the development commencing. The 'development' in this context includes the golf course, club house, leisure centre and the car parks serving both the golf club and the Park and Ride facility. It should be noted, however, that a variation to the planning permission has been submitted seeking to allow the construction only of the golf course to proceed during the construction of the roundabout. The proposal is intended to allow the developer's contractor access to the site for earthmoving vehicles to enable the works to commence as soon as possible, but that all HGV movements should thereafter be confined to the site, i.e. there should be no importing or exporting of materials prior to the completion of the roundabout. This application will be dealt with by GBC as Planning Authority in the normal manner.
- 12 Given the estimated timescales above, the Park and Ride facility should come into operation early in 2006.

CONSIDERATION BY GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE

- 13 The overall Park and Ride strategy was considered by GBC's Executive at its meeting on Thursday 13 January 2005. A more detailed report on the strategy will be brought to a future meeting of this Committee. In respect of Merrow, GBC's Executive resolved "that no works be commenced on the roundabout unless and until the contractual framework for the Merrow site in the eastern corridor is in place, so as to ensure that once started the project would be completed." (see paras. 8(d) and 9 above).

FUTURE REPORTS PLANNED ON RELATED ITEMS

- 14 There remain a number of related matters which must be considered by the Committee in the coming months. None of these are specific to the Merrow project. The topics include:
- The future park and ride strategy. This has been considered by Guildford Borough Council's Executive and since the strategy is a joint one it is necessary for this to be considered also by this Committee. The report will review the need for further Park and Ride facilities in other parts of Guildford, the availability and suitability of sites and options for funding both the capital and revenue costs of future provision.

- The outcomes of recently conducted surveys of users of the existing park and ride sites and bus services recently undertaken to determine the origins and destinations of users of the Park and Ride services This report will inform the future strategy referred to above.
- The outcomes of a financial audit currently being undertaken of the on-street parking account by the County Council's audit service.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 15 This report has no direct financial implications, since it makes no recommendations. However criticism was directed at both the County and Borough Councils at the time this matter was last considered by Committee. This was on the grounds that neither authority had been explicit about the entire costs of the project, irrespective of their funding source. This criticism was inaccurate, in that all the relevant information was in the public domain via SCC or GBC Committee and Executive reports and minutes. Nevertheless, in an effort to demonstrate openness, the latest figures are shown in the Tables in **ANNEXE A**. In some cases, the figures have been updated since the previous report. The notes which follow the Tables provide explanatory detail.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 16 The Park and Ride strategy in general and the Merrow Park and Ride project in particular are intended to protect and enhance the economy of Guildford Town Centre, encouraging its continued success as a centre of employment, shopping and leisure. The control of traffic congestion in the town centre, and the provision of out of town car parking spaces to replace town centre spaces lost through redevelopment are key parts of the strategy. It is recognised by both Surrey County Council and Guildford Borough Council, the partners to the strategy, that the construction of car parks on the edge of the town will be a necessary consequence of this. This recognition also exists in the government's Planning Policy Guidance, which permit the construction of Park and Ride facilities in the green belt in view of their wider net benefit. Every effort is being made in the case of the Merrow site, and will be made at future sites, to minimise the environmental impact of these sites, for example by sympathetic landscaping and the use of lighting with high 'cut-off'.

LEAD OFFICERS

DEREK LAKE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report and Minutes, Item 7, Guildford Local Committee,
29 January 2004

**SUMMARY OF THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF
THE MERROW PARK & RIDE PROJECT**

1. FIXED COSTS

	SCC contribution	GBC contribution	Developer's Contribution	Total	Notes
<u>Highway works</u>					
Works costs	800,000	Nil	285,000	1,085,000	1, 2
Design costs	75,000	Nil	Nil	75,000	
Total				1,160,000	
<u>Car Park</u>					
Acquisition of site	Nil	Nil	Unknown	Unknown	3
Construction, including lighting and CCTV.	Nil	730,000	Nil	730,000	
Landscaping	Nil	56,000	Nil	56,000	
WC facilities	Nil	125,000	Nil	125,000	
Total				911,000	

Notes:

- (1) The estimated construction cost of the highway junction is £1,160,000. This is not based on the tender prices, which are still being assessed. The net cost to the County Council after deduction of the developer's contribution is £875,000. Of this £275,000 has already been allocated from Local Transport Plan (LTP) funds for 2004/05. The remaining £600,000 is the subject of a bid for LTP funds for 2005/06.
- (2) The developer's contribution to the highway works is based on the estimated costs of the lesser ('left in, left out') junction that would be required were he to be able to proceed with the golf course and leisure facility in isolation.
- (3) Although the value of the site is not known, it should be noted that the site for the car park, access road and associated facilities will be leased to Guildford Borough Council at no cost.

**SUMMARY OF THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF
THE MERROW PARK & RIDE PROJECT**

2. ANNUAL REVENUE COSTS

	SCC contribution	GBC contribution	Developer's Contribution	Total	Notes
<u>Park and ride bus services</u>					
Cost of bus service	335,000	Nil	Nil	335,000	4
Income	(122,400)	Nil	(30,000)	(152,400)	5, 6
Net cost				182,600	
<u>Car park maintenance costs</u>					
Maintenance	Nil	11,320	Nil	11,320	
Cleaning	Nil	1,950	Nil	1,950	
Staffing	Nil	30,300	Nil	30,300	
Energy costs	Nil	1,530	Nil	1,530	
Rates	Nil	52,280	Nil	52,280	
Total				97,380	

Notes:

- (4) The cost of the bus service is based on two buses throughout the day, with a third bus provided during peak periods only.
- (5) Farebox income is based on predicted patronage as set out in the report to the Local Committee on 29 January 2004.
- (6) The developer's contribution to the bus services is not time-limited, but may impose obligations on the County Council, for example the provision of advertising of the golf course on the on-board advertising panels on the bus fleet.
- (7) SCC and SEEDA's offices at London Square use a private minibus service from the West House, Merrow site at an annual cost of some £72,000. It is intended that this service be discontinued and that staff and visitors be encouraged to use the new Merrow facility. The transfer of the budget for this has not yet been formally agreed, however, so this is not included in the Table above.
- (8) It had previously been hoped that a similar subsidy might be arranged from DEFRA on Epsom Road or that failing this their staff may add to patronage of the bus services. It appears that the site is soon to be vacated, so any income from this source must await decisions regarding the future use of the site.